



**OIE AD HOC GROUP ON KILLING METHODS FOR REPTILES COMMERCIALY PROCESSED
FOR THEIR SKINS, MEAT AND OTHER PRODUCTS¹**

Paris, 22–24 August 2017

1. Welcome and introduction

The OIE *ad hoc* Group on killing methods for farmed reptiles for their skins and meat (the *ad hoc* Group) met at the OIE Headquarters on 22–24 August 2017.

The members of the *ad hoc* Group and other participants taking part in the meeting are listed at Annex I.

The Director General of OIE, Dr Monique Eloit, welcomed and thanked the *ad hoc* Group on their commitment to work with the OIE on this topic. She highlighted the importance of this work and their contribution. The Director General also noted the new procedure for the nomination for election of members of the Specialist Commissions, and the call for applications that was recently published on the OIE website and that the members of the group should consider if they wished to apply.

In terms of the process for the *ad hoc* Group, the Head of the Standards Department, Ms Ann Backhouse, advised members the report of this meeting will be presented to the Terrestrial Animal Health Standards Commission (Code Commission) in September 2017. The Code Commission would review the report and the draft new chapter and decide if it was to be annexed to their report and circulated for the first round of Member Country comments. In revising the draft new chapter, Dr Leopoldo Stuardo noted the group should also consider all comments provided by the Code Commission in their last report of the February 2017 meeting.

Dr William B. Karesh, Chair of the *ad hoc* Group, welcomed the members to the meeting and thanked them for the excellent work already done through the electronic working group. All members of the group agreed that the opportunity to work on the draft new chapter electronically and through teleconference was very productive and that this initiative should be encouraged within the OIE.

2. Confirmation of the Agenda and the Terms of References

The draft agenda was adopted without modifications.

The *ad hoc* Group reviewed the Terms of Reference and considered they were adequate for the work that was before them. In respect of the scope of the work, the group agreed to include other products as reptiles in commercial processing were also used for the collection of blood and eggs. In regards to the name of the group as the title of the chapter had been modified the name of the *ad hoc* Group was also amended to reflect this.

The Terms of Reference for the *ad hoc* Group and the adopted agenda of the meeting are presented in Annex II and Annex III respectively.

¹ Note: This *ad hoc* Group report reflects the views of its members and may not necessarily reflect the views of the OIE. This report should be read in conjunction with the September 2016 report of the Terrestrial Animal Health Standards Commission because this report provides its considerations and comments. It is available at <http://www.oie.int/en/international-standard-setting/specialists-commissions-groups/code-commission-reports/meetings-reports/>

3. Review of draft new Chapter 7.Y. Killing methods for reptiles commercially processed for their skins, meat and other products

Taking into account the request from the Code Commission to restructure the draft new chapter in order to harmonise it with others chapters of the *Terrestrial Code*, the *ad hoc* Group reviewed the chapter article by article. The group considered that following the scope and definitions it was more logical to start with general considerations including the source of the animals followed by selection of the stunning methods, restraint and killing methods. As requested by the Code Commission, the group also included outcome-based criteria (measurables) to support the recommendations in each section.

Regarding to the scope and title of the chapter, the *ad hoc* Group agreed to modify it to include reference to 'other products' (for example, collection of organs, blood, body parts and eggs) to clarify the recommendations in the chapter apply to the process of killing reptiles for commercially processed meat and skins and other products.

The *ad hoc* Group agreed that there was no need to repeat definitions that are already in the glossary of the *Terrestrial Code*. The group noted that in respect of the definition of 'stunning' it was appropriate to use a modified one in order to highlight that for reptiles, the reference to *slaughter* (as referenced in the glossary definition of *stunning*) is not appropriate, as *slaughter* (death by bleeding) is an unacceptable method for killing reptiles.

Regarding to the criteria for the selection of each method, the *ad hoc* Group structured each article starting with recommendations for the use of the different methods, and rather than refer to the advantages and disadvantages of each method, decided to address these within the recommendations. In addition the *ad hoc* Group inserted for each method, the outcome-based criteria (or measurables) that should be assessed to ensure that the method was appropriately applied according to the expected results.

The *ad hoc* Group agreed not to include specific behavioural parameters to measure the effectiveness of each of the killing methods as this could lead to misinterpretation due to the differences between animals and species, but included this in the article on General Considerations.

The *ad hoc* Group had a broad discussion on the use of the electrical stunning method, in particular whether or not to include specific electrical parameters. However, noting its effectiveness can be variable, depending on species anatomy and physiology and that there were also a number of external factors that could also affect its effectiveness, the group decided not to include specific electrical parameters to be used with this method. Because of the importance of this method being used correctly, the group developed general recommendations and outcome-based criteria (or measurables), that should be considered, to ensure the effectiveness of this method.

In relation to the article on the use of the captive bolt method, the *ad hoc* Group considered the effectiveness of this method and in view of the fact that a single action should cause both unconsciousness and death, it could be considered as both a method for stunning and killing animals.

Regarding to the use of a percussive blow to the head the *ad hoc* Group agreed that the recommendations should clarify how this method should be applied in order to achieve the desired result and the outcome-based criteria (measurables) that should be checked when looking for the effectiveness of the method.

Concerning the article on the use of decapitation as a killing method, the *ad hoc* Group reinforced the need to stun the animal before decapitation because reptiles remain conscious even after the decapitation.

Finally, the group discussed the particular issues associated with the use of chemical agents in relation to restraint, stunning and killing of animals. While these methods are considerate acceptable by some authors (e.g. Mader D., 2006), the use of chemical agents may not be practical or cost effective in the animal production context. It was also considered important to emphasis in the draft chapter that the use of chemicals, should be under veterinary supervision, according to national legislation and the guidance of the Competent Authority.

The draft chapter is presented as [Annex IV](#).

4. Programme for further work after this meeting

The Code Commission will consider the draft chapter and the report of the *ad hoc* Group during its September 2017 meeting. The Code Commission will decide if the draft revised chapter will be circulated for Member Country comments and whether it will consider comments received at its February 2018 meeting or if it will request the OIE to convene another face to face meeting of the *ad hoc* Group in order to review those comments received.

5. Other business

No other new issues were proposed for discussion.

.../Appendices

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Terms of reference

Taking into account:

- the background history of the OIE regarding animal welfare standards;
- the discussions at the Animal Welfare Working Group and at the Wildlife Working Group;
- the request from the Member Countries.

The *ad hoc* Group is requested to review the proposed draft chapter and in doing so experts are requested to:

- focus on commercial scale slaughter of reptiles for their skin, meat and other products;
- take into account the restrictions under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), on the source of the animals and related issues; and
- cover as a priority the following species: crocodiles and snakes.

These standards must:

- be based on science (scientific references must be provided and included in the draft text);
- harmonised in their structure with the rest of the *Terrestrial Code*, including the other animal welfare and production system chapters; and
- use criteria that address the outcomes at the animal level (animal-based).

Outputs of the *ad hoc* Group:

- a report of the group together with a revised draft chapter will be provided to the Code Commission and the Wildlife Working Group for their consideration.
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Adopted agenda

1. Welcome and introduction.
 2. Confirmation of the Agenda and the Terms of References for the Group.
 3. Review of the draft Chapter 7.Y. Killing methods for reptiles commercially processed for their skins and meat, presented at the February 2017 Code Commission meeting, and amend text as appropriate based on the Code Commission recommendations.
 3. Other business.
 4. Draft a report of the *ad hoc* Group meeting.
 5. Programme for further work after this meeting
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[Note: this Annex has been replaced by Annex 27 to the report of the meeting of the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Standards Commission which was held on 18–29 September 2017.]

